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SACRAMENTO WOMAN CHARGED IN BANK FRAUD SCHEME

SACRAMENTO - - United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury in Sacramento returned an indictment charging LATONYA NASHA SMITH, 38, of Sacramento, California, with multiple counts of bank fraud and possession of stolen mail.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Sacramento Sheriff's Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney James P. Arguelles, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment charges that during the period of May through August of 2004, defendant SMITH participated in a scheme to defraud involving the use of counterfeit checks to make purchases. Specifically, the indictment charges that after fraudulently obtaining a check which had been stolen from the mail, SMITH ordered new checks which contained her name, but the bank account information of the mail theft victim. The indictment further charges that after obtaining these bogus checks, SMITH used them to make fraudulent purchases at Albertson's grocery stores, Walgreens, and Marshalls.

If convicted, defendant SMITH faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and up to a \$1,000,000 fine for each count of bank fraud which is charged, and a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 for the possession of stolen mail charge.

The charges in the indictment are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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